

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are all the claims pending in the application.

I. Formalities

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 and for confirming receipt of the certified copies of the priority documents.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that the Formal Drawings filed on August 28, 2001 have been accepted.

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner return an initialed copy of the form PTO-1449 submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on August 6, 2004.

II. Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-2 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ikeda (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0018129 A1) ["Ikeda"]. Applicant traverses the rejection.

Because the present application's priority dates (August 28, 2000 and March 15, 2001) predate Ikeda's filing date (June 29, 2001), Applicant submits that the Examiner may not rely on Ikeda. Applicant is hereby submitting a verified English translation of this application's priority documents, JP 2000-257469 and JP 2001-074170, thereby, perfecting priority.

Applicant requests that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

IV. Claim Objection and Allowed Claims

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 3-8 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant holds rewriting these claims in abeyance until the subject matter regarding their base claims is resolved.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 11-14. In the reasons for allowance, however, the Examiner contends that Ikeda discloses certain features in independent claims 1 and 9. Applicant submits that, because Ikeda is not prior art against this application, the Examiner's contentions as to what Ikeda may disclose are not applicable.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

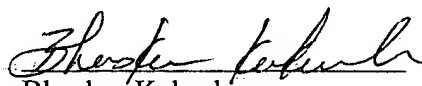
Respectfully submitted,

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